



## Don't Have A Cow Man

by Tom Ash

Who (or should I say Moo) says you don't learn something new every day. I got a call on a rainy afternoon that a herd of cattle were loose up at Crown Valley and trampling over the University of Riverside and Fish & Game study sites. After a 20 minute muddy drive I found 24 head of cattle had discovered a grazing nirvana on our no-cow allowed reserve. It looked like they hadn't done much damage yet so I called for some Calvary (one of our maintenance staff and my supervisor). As I waited for my reinforcements I grabbed some tee posts and barbed wire and made a quick holding pen next to the road. Soon my help arrived and with raincoats on we rounded up that muddy gang and locked them in the pen. But now what do you do, look for lost cow ads in the paper, have a big barbecue? The Barbecue was very tempting, but instead we called animal control. Animal control let us know "We don't do cattle and we don't know who does."

Frustrated, I called an old cowboy friend of mine and after a good laugh he told me to call my local state brand inspector. Who would have known? Well I called the brand inspector (they're listed) and he came out the next morning with his brand book. Now this book was three inches thick and had every cattle brand in the state. After looking at the cows brand he thumbed through the book and bam; there was the owners name, address and phone. We called the owners and explained the situation about the potential for damage and if it happened again we would have to take action. More importantly come and get your beef! When they arrived to drive their cattle home we were told it wouldn't happen again, they had a great caretaker and it must have been just a fluke that they escaped in the first place.

OK, two days later and still raining I found fourteen head of cattle with the same brand and this time damage to the study sites were done. So, I called the State Brand Inspector again and this time he brought along some cowboys to round up the cattle and put them on a trailer and took them to a cattle impound yard. Yep, just like a car impound yard there is one for cattle. And just like a car impound its cash only to get them back. When we added up the cost of the damage, time, transportation, and impound fees it cost the owners \$1500 dollars to free those bovines. Needless to say I haven't seen a cow on the reserve ever since.

### Changes in Phone Number and Job Line

The Job Line has been discontinued in favor of the Job List on the website. The Job Line was mostly being used by non-members. (Only about 6-8 calls per month.) The length of time for the message was cut by Pac Bell last year making it impossible to list all of the jobs we had at times. We can tell you a lot more about the job on the website. These are the reasons we made the change.

The "800" number was discontinued due to a lack of use and about half of those using it were from Sacramento where it was a local call.

The website is <[www.prac.ws](http://www.prac.ws)>

The office phone will continue to be (916) 558-3734.

# From the President's Desk

Hello Everyone,

We had a lot accomplished at the conference this year and I, once again, would like to thank everyone involved. We need to start looking ahead to next year's conference in San Diego. The San Diego conference will be held from Tuesday, March 5 to Friday, March 8, 2002, at the Inn Suites, Balboa Park. I am seeking some of our talented individuals from the San Diego area to help us plan the conference. We will be starting in June with some brain storming sessions. We need volunteers, from local and State Parks, to help organize workshops, field trips, vendors, silent auction, speakers and the evening dinners. If your interested in helping, please contact me or Doug Bryce.

The annual meeting was well attended and I appreciate all the support the members have shown the board members. The recommendations for Park Ranger Standards and Training were approved. We will be moving forward with the Standards and Training committee to establish training programs and a certification process. Our initial goal is to get our members, the agencies they work for, behind this program and show support. I appreciate everyone's help with the committees and their recommendations to the Standards and Training Committee. It is important that you stay involved with the committees, or the Standards & Training, as we begin developing programs. If you would like to help out or need more information, please contact me, Mike Chiesa or your regional board director.

As for the Park Ranger/Peace Officer, (Grandfather clause), the board members voted in February to table any discussions on this matter for 1 year. We felt that establishing the Standards and Training should be foremost and this issue was hindering its progress.

I will keep you updated on our progress. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, contact me (916) 875-6672 or email: [onbelay@innercite.com](mailto:onbelay@innercite.com)

Stay Safe,

*John Havicon, President, Park Rangers Association of California*

## **Park Rangers Association of California Board Meeting Minutes**

**March 15, 2001**

Meeting called to order at 1723 hrs.

Present: John Havicon, President; Russ Hauck, Past-president; Mike Chiesa, Region 1; Jeff Gaffney, Region 2; Walt Young, Region 4; and Tom Ash, Region 5.

Absent: Steve Hogue, Region 3.

The board approved the minutes of the 01-11-01 board meeting.

Directors reports: The directors provided their reports. (See individual reports.).

John provided an office manager update. Membership numbers are up in all regions.

Standards & Training: The board reviewed the finalized recommended minimum training standards for park rangers. Final comments were made. Standards to presented to membership at the general membership meeting on 3/17/01. Mike to present standards to membership with assistance from committee co-chairs, Amy Lethbridge and Lee Hickinbotham.

Smittys book was discussed. The board decided to get a determination of the publishing cost of the book before proceeding further.

Meeting adjourned at 1840 hrs.

# Standards and Training Committee Update

by Mike Chiesa

After forming a year ago at the 2000 Parks Conference in Van Nuys, the Standards and Training Committee has completed the first phase of its mission, to establish recommended minimum training standards for park rangers in California. Establishing statewide, professional training standards for park rangers is also one of the primary goals of PRAC, as outlined in the PRAC Policy Manual. The committee, comprising of over 17 park professionals, from a variety of agencies throughout California has worked hard over the last year to come up with what we thought would be the minimum level of training required to make a well-rounded ranger. The Standards and Training Committee worked hand-in-hand with the other PRAC committees to establish recommendations for minimum ranger training in the areas of Interpretation, Resource Management, Park Maintenance & Operations, Fire Management, Emergency Medical Services, and Law Enforcement. It is important to remember that these standards serve only as recommendations and will not be legislatively mandated.

The Standards & Training Committee is co-chaired by Amy Lethbridge from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) and Lee Hickinbotham from the City of Palo Alto. The committee recognized the fact that rangers are a very diverse group of people with many different duties and responsibilities that vary greatly from agency to agency. We thought that the first order of business was to see what types of duties rangers performed throughout the state and what type of training the agencies currently provided to entry-level rangers. The committee devised a draft survey to send out to all local park agencies that employed rangers in California. Amy put the resources of her agency into finalizing the survey in a professional format, mailing it out, and compiling the data. Special thanks go to Dan Tholund from MRCA for his hard work developing the actual survey on the computer, compiling the results, and putting up with the many requests for changes made by committee members.

The results of the survey demonstrated what the committee already suspected; rangers are a diverse group of people. It also showed that many agencies had rangers performing duties with little or no formal training to perform those duties. After reviewing the survey results, the committee met with the other PRAC committees and came up with the minimum recommended training standards for park rangers. We realized that all rangers do not perform all of the duties that there are minimum training recommendations for. The committees did agree that it would be good for all rangers to have a minimum base-level of knowledge in all areas to make them more well-rounded, enhance their skill level for transfer opportunities, and to give them a better understanding and appreciation for the other duties that they may not perform themselves. The committee is aware that the public does

not differentiate between the different types of rangers, and having a minimum base knowledge will help rangers answer questions the visitors may expect a ranger to know the answer to and prove beneficial to the ranger, the agencies, and the park visitors.

The minimum recommended training standards established by the committee are:

Basic Interpretive Training: 40 hours (planning programs, presentation skills)

Resource Management: 80 hours (biology, geography, and resource protection)

Maintenance & Operations: 40 hours (construction, facility maintenance, equipment safety, trails)

Fire Management: 44 hours (Wildfire Control, ICS, HazMat, H2O Safety, Ext.)

Emergency Medical: 22 hours (Title 22)

Law Enforcement: 132 hours (Level III Reserve, includes Title 22 above and 832)

I have only summarized the recommendations above for the sake of space. If anybody would like a copy of the training recommendations, you may contact me and I will send you a copy. We hope to have a training page on the web site which will have the recommendations listed.

The standards were presented to the membership at the General Membership meeting at the conference in Sacramento this year. The members were asked to vote on acceptance of these standards. The members voted to approve the standards. The standards are only recommendations and the PRAC board voted to not seek legislation to make the standards mandated without a vote of approval from the general membership.

The Standards and Training Committee will now work to implement these standards for PRAC. A certification process will eventually be created. Prior training and experience will be accepted to meet the minimum training standards. The committees work is far from over. Now we must help get a program started for implementation of the standards and to help make it easy for individuals and agencies that want to participate, to meet the recommended minimum training standards. Anyone who is interested in helping with the committee or who has questions about the standards may contact me at [mchiesa@mcn.org](mailto:mchiesa@mcn.org) or at (707) 565-1234, ext. 99462.

The committee is very excited about what has been accomplished so far and look forward to the work ahead. I look forward to working with you on implementing these recommended minimum training standards for our profession.

# Inmates, Fire, Children, & Goats: An Unlikely Team for a Successful War Against Non-Native, Invasive Plants

by Steven Hogue

**L**ike other parks, the City of Chico Park Department has its problems with invasive, non-native plants taking over certain locations. What Chico has done in response, is used a varied combination of programs to eradicate undesirable Star Thistle, Himalayan Blackberry, Vinca, and Pyracantha.

For the past several years, the City of Chico has contracted with a private goat herder to bring his always hungry little friends into Bidwell Park. This was done as an alternative method to the use of herbicides. The goats not only eat away at the Himalayan Blackberry leaves and Star Thistle, but are a smashing hit with park visitors! Having goats do the work has proved to be a great public education and relations tool. While visitors are entertained, they also become educated on the problems associated with non-native, invasive vegetation which can take over native plant communities. The results of grazing take time to see. Several years usage is necessary to see the real affects of their insatiable appetite called work. The only real drawback to using goats is the predators. In one season, seven goats were lost to coyotes, despite a fence of low electrical charge. A couple more goats were lost to domestic dogs (but really, my dog is too friendly to do anything like that!).

In much larger areas, Star Thistle has been attacked using the weapon of fire. Several large plots of land have been burned through controlled fires for the last several years with apparent positive results. Fire is used in large, open areas, and is the first choice of tool for the City of Chico in fighting Star Thistle because it is more effective in killing the seeds. In areas closer to homes and/or dense vegetation, the goats are used.

In other areas dominated by non-native plants, inmates from the California Department of Corrections' Salt Creek Camp (supervised by a CDF captain) have performed manual removal of Himalayan Blackberry and Arundo. Using chainsaws, shovels, and McLeods, inmates have done different things. In some areas, the blackberry was

cut down enough in winter, so that in spring, the goats could get into the once impenetrable thickets and eat the leaves from the cane. In other areas, the inmates cut the blackberries down to the ground and removed the roots with shovels. This later work was performed in stream bank areas. Arundo has also been removed by the inmates. Upon being cut to the ground, City maintenance workers dabbed the freshly cut portions of individual shoots with an herbicide to kill them. For \$75 per day and fuel for their bus, the City of Chico gets a 15-17 person work crew. The inmates are low risk, having been convicted mostly of DUI and theft crimes. From personal observation, visitors do not seem to be worried from the inmates' presence, and the inmates enjoy working in a park setting.

Following in the tracks of the inmates are school children led by an organization called "Streaminders." "Streaminders" is comprised of college students, professors, community volunteers, and K-12 teachers. Leading the Bidwell Park project is Roxanne Baxter, whom also happens to be a seasonal park ranger for the City of Chico. Involved children learn they can make a difference in their community. Where Himalayan Blackberry roots have been removed by the inmates, children go in and replace them with Deer Grass, Red Bud, Willows, Sycamores, Oaks, and other native species. Additionally, the children removed a number of Privets and Periwinkles themselves. The children learn the importance of biodiversity in a fragile riparian ecosystem. Not only are the children providing bank stabilization with their revegetation, but they are providing important habitat for the park's wildlife too.

While all of the mentioned forms of non-native plant removal used by the City of Chico do not literally take place with each other, they are links in a chain of tools. All methods are specific to the constraints and objectives of specific areas in the park. These methods are also educational to school children and the public in general. While I cannot say that all of these methods would work everywhere, they have proven their worth in the urban setting of Chico's Bidwell Park.

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## Who Am I? by Steve Hogue

Hello all! As the new Director of Region 3, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Steve Hogue. I have been employed by the City of Chico Park Department since June 1997 as a park ranger. In May 1998, I also tacked on the title of volunteer coordinator (as a result of budget cuts). I have an Associate's Degree in Social and Behavioral Science (hey, come on, I'm workin' towards a bachelors!), have completed 832 P.C., Level 2 Reserve, the basic academy, and the USFS Basic Wildland course. Training is important to me and I will strive to do my best to bring these opportunities to the membership. Membership in Region 3 is low, so recruitment will be a priority to me. Of course, to entice new members, we

must have the training opportunities which I discussed. Likewise, if anyone has a particular skill and would like to offer their knowledge in the form of a training seminar, please contact me so we can get something going.

Well, now that my little introduction is done, and I have successfully eluded making this look like some sort of a newspaper personal ad, I will close. If anyone has questions, comments, concerns, or requests (no, I won't help you move), please feel free to e-mail me at [shogue@ci.chico.ca.us](mailto:shogue@ci.chico.ca.us), call me at my voice mail at (530) 895-4758, or fax me at my office (ok, it's not **my** office, but it is **an** office which I visit on a regular basis) at (530) 895-4825. Take care all, play nicely and stay safe!

# **A Book To Report On**

**by Lee Hickinbotham**

As the summer nears and the days get warmer I have made it a goal to get out of my truck and do more foot patrols through the Preserves that we manage. Besides working off that winter insulation around my mid-section, I have become more approachable to the visitors. Many of the visitors have wonderful questions such as when do the egrets start to nest or when are the rattlesnakes coming out. I have also been asked questions like what is the best month to see meteor showers or when are the hummingbirds coming back? Trying to live up to the reputation that the public has of a Park Ranger, that we know everything about the out of doors, I routinely call on our naturalist for the information I don't have answers on

She recommended a book that helps me to answer most of their questions. It is the Northern California Seasonal Guide To The Natural Year. It is written by Bill McMillon and published by Fulcrum Publishing. It is reasonably priced at \$15.95 and small enough to fit nicely into your pack. This book provides a month to month guide on when and where to go when the natural events are happening. It also provides Hotspots names of parks, preserves, open space, or lakes you can go to experience these natural events. You can also apply this information to your own park based on the month of the year.

So as you get out of your truck this season and get back to educating the public on the flora and fauna, pick up a copy of this book to help keep up that reputation that we all work so hard to keep.

Take the time to read and enjoy the book

## **Park Rangers Association of California General Membership Meeting Minutes**

**March 17, 2001**

Meeting called to order at 1115 hrs.

Attendance: John Havicon, President; Russ Hauck, Past-president; Mike Chiesa, Region 1; Jeff Gaffney, Region 2; Steve Hogue, Region 3; Walt Young, Region 4; and Tom Ash, Region 5.

Standards and Training: John brought up the standards and training compiled through the work of the various PRAC committees. Copies of the standards were handed out to the members attending. Mike discussed the standards to the members and how they were decided upon. Each of the individual sub-committees chairs presented how their committees came up with the recommendations for their area, Interpretation, Resource Management, Maintenance, Fire fighting, EMS, and Law Enforcement.

The board voted that no legislation would be pursued to legally mandate the training standards without a vote of the membership. The standards are only to serve as minimum recommendation to provide the basic training for a well-rounded ranger. The standards and training will be implemented with the standards and training committee. It will be up to all members to encourage their agencies to participate with the new standards. The board will be willing to help any members with talking with their agencies.

After the standards were presented a discussion began about the standards. Many positive comments and suggestions were made for implementing the standards.

A vote was taking of voting members in attendance to either approve or disapprove of the standards. 48 voting members were in attendance at the meeting. The results of the election are as follows:

47 ayes

1 abstain

The standards were approved by the membership. The Standards and Training Committee will begin to work on implementing the new standards.

Meeting adjourned at 1200 hrs.

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Board Officers  
2001**

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The *Signpost* is published by THE PARK RANGERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA (PRAC). THE ASSOCIATION MAILING ADDRESS IS P.O. BOX 292010, SACRAMENTO, CA, 95829. THE *Signpost* Editor is David Brooks. ARTICLES OF 1,000 WORDS, OR LESS ARE WELCOME. ALL SUBMISSIONS BECOME PROPERTY OF PRAC AND MAY BE EDITED WITHOUT NOTICE.

Submissions can be mailed to David Brooks, 560 Hillcrest Dr., Ben Lomond, CA, 95005. INFORMATION CAN ALSO BE SUBMITTED BY TELEPHONE AT (831) 336-2948.

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**VOTING MEMBERSHIP**  
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STUDENT ..... \$20 \_\_\_\_\_  
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